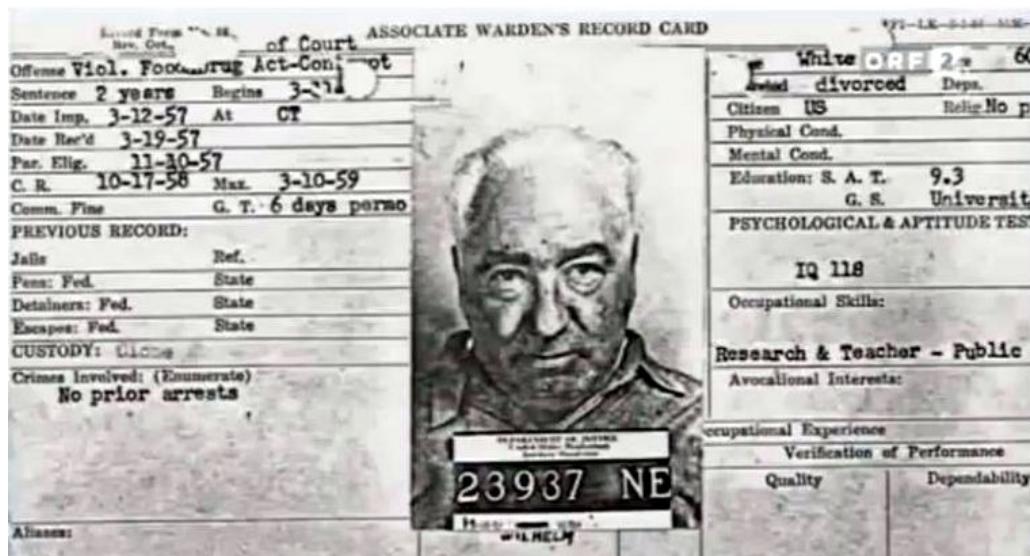


OP-EDS

DON'T CHIP OFF THE OLD MR. BLOCK

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Donald Trump wasn't the first to call Queens home while being a magnet for controversy and legal trouble due to flouting convention in sexual relationships and work, but lacks Wilhelm Reich's emphasis on free choice and mutual respect. Public domain.

"Mr. Block ... licks the hand that smites him and kisses the boot that kicks him." *Industrial Worker* editor Walker C. Smith wasn't foreseeing, by 111 years, Walter Block, PhD's "[Libertarians Should Vote For Trump](#)" (*The Wall Street Journal*, May 29); the character from Walker's newspaper was fictional enough to be a blockhead in the most literal sense.

Dr. Block should get his head examined. "Hats off" to inviting Donald Trump to the Libertarian National Convention as being a more effective move than anything else the Libertarian Party "did in more than half a century of existence?" Such mental gymnastics dwarf the cartoon Block's comically undersized bowler.

Block wants "the party of principle to be better publicized," but if an afterthought to Trump's ambition is the best notice they can get, libertarians could quote Progressive Conservative minister Darcy McKeough: "those are my principles, and if you don't like them I have some others." Maybe even take a page from the name of McKeough's party and rename themselves "authoritarian libertarians."

“Libertarian socialists” may seem just as oxymoronic; Block contrasts Republican “free enterprise” with “Biden the socialist.” Yet he extolled the voluntary socialism of “the convent, monastery, kibbutz, commune, syndicalist association, cooperative” in the 2019 *Journal* op-ed “[Bad Capitalism and Good Socialism](#),” garnering a letter to the editor [indignant](#) at Block for not mentioning that “there are no countries in which socialism has worked on a large scale” (the same can be said of actually existing state capitalism).

Block trusts Trump’s promise of leniency for Ross Ulbricht during his second term (in living memory of Jimmy Carter enacting the Granting Pardon for Violations of the Selective Service Act immediately upon starting his first), and makes a qualified claim that through his re-election “we may get a slightly more libertarian president” than Biden.

On tariffs, perhaps: Biden has augmented Trump’s. Regarding the underlying principle that voluntary exchange is mutually beneficial, Trump surpasses Pat Buchanan’s relatively literate [dismissal](#) of its intellectual origins in “scribblers like David Ricardo, James Mill and John Stuart Mill,” roaring that the notion that “both sides win” in negotiations is “a bunch of crap.”

Block might include that among the “obnoxious behavior” characteristic of gruff New Yorkers: Trump as Archie Bunker with his prejudices discreetly de-emphasized. Not that the star of *The Apprentice* would follow the lead of *Archie Bunker’s Place* in getting berated as “one of them bleeding-heart liberals” for supporting gender neutrality in sports when a girl Bunker raises is turned away from an all-male baseball team.

Trump’s GOP would be even more unwelcome to another sitcom conservative, Alex P. Keaton from *Family Ties*, who teased his flower-adult parents but cited John Stuart Mill when joining them in opposing book bans. Alex was the only Keaton to enthuse over Milton Friedman, but they all could have appreciated Friedman’s [insistence](#) that “I admire [modern liberals] for the softness of their heart,” only objecting when it “extends to their head as well.” That’s a long way from excusing illiberalism that is simultaneously hard-hearted and blockheaded.

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